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Special Broadcasting Service

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The **Special Broadcasting Service (SBS)** is a hybrid-funded Australian [public service broadcaster](#). About 80 per cent of funding for the company is derived from the Australian Government.^[1] SBS operates five TV channels ([SBS](#), [SBS Viceland](#), [SBS World Movies](#), [SBS Food](#) and [NITV](#)) and seven radio networks (SBS Radios 1, 2 and 3, Arabic24, SBS Chill, SBS PopDesi and [SBS PopAsia](#)).

SBS Online is home to SBS On Demand video streaming service. The stated purpose of SBS is "to provide multilingual and multicultural radio and television services that inform, educate and entertain all Australians and, in doing so, reflect Australia's multicultural society".^[2] SBS is one of five main [free-to-air](#) networks in Australia.

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Special Broadcasting Service



Type	Public broadcasting
Founded	1 January 1978; 43 years ago
Founder	Fraser Government
Headquarters	Artarmon, New South Wales, Australia
Key people	George Savvides (Chairman) James Taylor (Managing Director)
Owner	Australian Government
Divisions	SBS Television SBS Radio
Website	sbs.com.au

History [edit]

As a result of extensive [post-World War II immigration to Australia](#), the federal government began to consider the need for "ethnic broadcasting" – programming targeted at ethnic minorities and mostly delivered in languages other than English. Until 1970, radio stations were prevented by law from broadcasting in foreign languages for more than 2.5 hours per week.^[3] In June 1975, two "experimental" radio stations began broadcasting: 2EA in [Sydney](#) and 3EA in [Melbourne](#) (EA stood for "Ethnic Australia"). In March 1976, the federal government established the Consultative Committee on Ethnic Broadcasting, followed by the National Ethnic Broadcasting Advisory Council in January 1977. Initially, it was considered feasible for ethnic broadcasting to be delivered by the [Australian Broadcasting Commission](#) (ABC); however, this plan was abandoned in mid-1977.^[4]

In October 1977, the government announced the creation of SBS as a new independent [statutory authority](#) for ethnic broadcasting.^[5] This was achieved by an amendment^[6] to the [Broadcasting Act 1942](#). SBS formally came into existence on 1 January 1978.^[4] The inaugural chairman of SBS was Grisha Sklovsky, and the inaugural executive director was Ronald Fowell. The service was initially a radio network, and had oversight only of the two existing stations 2EA and 3EA.^[4] It was always intended that it would be enlarged, but this process was controversial – the [Federation of Australian Commercial Television Stations](#) wanted the television functions to be controlled by the ABC.^[7]

In March 1979, the government set up the Ethnic Television Review Panel, which recommended that SBS expand into television. [SBS TV](#) began test transmissions in April 1979 when it showed various foreign language programs on [ABV-2](#) Melbourne and [ABN-2](#) Sydney on Sunday mornings. Full-time transmission began at 6:30 pm on 24 October 1980 ([United Nations Day](#)), as Channel 0/28. The first program shown was a documentary entitled *Who Are We?*, which was hosted by veteran news presenter Peter Luck. At the time, SBS was broadcasting on [UHF](#) Channel 28 and [VHF](#) Channel 0 (pronounced as "oh" and not "zero"), with a planned discontinuation of the latter at some time in the future. [Bruce Gyngell](#), who [introduced television to Australia in 1956](#), was given the task of introducing the first batch of programs on the new station.

SBS programming content was initially imported from the countries-of-origin of Australia's major migrant communities and then subtitled in English.^[8]

In October–November 1983, the service expanded into [Canberra](#), [Cooma](#) and [Goulburn](#).^[9] At the same time, changed its name to Network 0–28. Its new slogan was the long-running "Bringing the World Back Home".^[10] The network changed its name to SBS in February 1985 and began daytime transmissions.^[9] SBS expanded to [Brisbane](#), [Adelaide](#), [Newcastle](#), [Wollongong](#) and the [Gold Coast](#) in June of that year.^[9]

On 5 January 1986, SBS ceased broadcasting on the [VHF](#) channel 0 frequency. Although many Australians at the time did not have UHF antennas, SBS's VHF licence had already been extended by a year at this stage and not all antennas had worked well with the low-frequency Channel 0 either.^[10]

In August 1986, the government proposed legislation that would merge SBS into the [ABC](#). This was highly unpopular with ethnic-minority communities^[citation needed], leading the [Prime Minister of Australia](#), [Bob Hawke](#), to announce in 1987 that the proposed amalgamation would not proceed.^[citation needed] The [SBS Radio and Television Youth Orchestra](#) was launched in 1988 with founding conductor [Matthew Krel](#).^[citation needed]

Plans to introduce limited commercial-program sponsorship, as well as the establishment of SBS as an independent corporation with its own charter, were put in place in July 1989. [Eat Carpet](#), showcasing local and international short films, was also launched in 1989.^[citation needed] The proclamation of the Special Broadcasting Service Act 1991 officially made SBS a corporation in 1991. Throughout the early 1990s, [SBS TV](#) coverage was expanded further to include new areas such as the [Latrobe Valley](#), [Spencer Gulf](#), [Darwin](#), northeast [Tasmania](#), [Cairns](#) and [Townsville](#).^[citation needed]

In 1992, SBS's radio and television facilities were gradually moved to new headquarters in [Artarmon, New South Wales](#), from their original studios at [Bondi Junction](#) (radio) and [Milsons Point](#) (television). The new building was officially opened on 10 November 1993 by the prime minister, [Paul Keating](#). A national radio network was launched in January 1994. The new service initially covered Brisbane, [Adelaide](#), [Perth](#) and [Darwin](#), while original stations 2EA and 3EA were renamed Radio Sydney and Radio Melbourne respectively. The new national service was launched on a separate frequency in Sydney and Melbourne in July of that year. Throughout 1996, radio services were expanded to cover [Hobart](#) and [Canberra](#), while [SBS TV](#)'s coverage was further expanded to include the [New South Wales North Coast](#) and [Albury](#).

[Comedy Central's South Park](#), SBS's most successful imported television series, was first aired in 1997. A time-delay system was installed for [South Australia](#) in May 1999, shortly before the establishment of the Transmission Services division (intended to manage transmission and self-help services). A New Media division, responsible for the SBS website, was established at the start of 2000 in time for the first [webcast](#) of the [Australian Film Institute Awards](#). Ratings continued to increase through 2000 to 2001 – increasing to an overall 5.2% average weekly audience share.^[11]

In April 2003, SBS Radio dropped four languages and added four others while increasing the broadcast hours for [Cantonese](#), [Mandarin](#), and [Arabic](#). SBS broadcast



The wall of the SBS carpark in Artarmon, showing the "Mercator" logo used from 1993 to 2008

the 2004 [Athens Olympics](#) in partnership with the [Seven Network](#). SBS broadcast [Euro 2008](#) in Austria and Switzerland.

[Tagalog](#), [Vietnamese](#) and [Arabic language](#) broadcasts were added to SBS's *WorldWatch* television schedule in 2003.^[12] The [Vietnamese community](#) protested the Vietnamese-language service, which was just taken from [VTV4](#), Vietnam's government-controlled national broadcaster. They found the portrayal of the communist [Vietnamese flag](#) and [Ho Chi Minh](#) offensive and stated that the program's lack of reporting on political arrests and religious oppression was also offensive, especially to those who had fled the country following the [Vietnam War](#).^[13] This backlash prompted SBS to display disclaimers before all externally produced bulletins in order to distance it from the content.

In May 2008, SBS unveiled a new-look logo as well as a new [backronymic](#) slogan: "Six Billion Stories and counting".^[14]

On 8 May 2012, SBS received \$158 million in government funding,^[15] of which \$15 million would be used yearly, to fund the formation of a new free-to-air channel devoted to [the indigenous peoples of Australia](#).^[16] which would replace the existing [National Indigenous Television](#) on 12 December 2012, with 90% of its staff transferring to this new channel.^[17] On 12 December 2012, NITV was re-launched as an SBS-operated [free-to-air](#) channel, replacing SBS4.^[18]



The SBS building in Melbourne's Federation Square

SBS is a supporter of [same-sex marriage](#)^[19] and pulled an anti-same-sex marriage advertisement ahead of its telecast of the [Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras](#).^[20] Then managing director, [Michael Ebeid](#), defended SBS's position on the issue.^[19]

On 17 November 2015, the new food channel, SBS Food Network, was launched. On 17 November 2018, the channel became SBS Food.

In June 2016, SBS announced that SBS 2 was set to be rebranded as [SBS Viceland](#) with content from US-Canadian youth Vice Media from November 2016.^[21]

On 1 July 2019, SBS relaunched their former pay-TV movie channel, World Movies as [SBS World Movies](#) and it became a free-to-air channel.

Services [edit]

Television [edit]

Regardless of state or territory, SBS television services always use the callsign "SBS". On 14 December 2006, SBS announced its intention to change to [720p](#) as its [high-definition](#) transmission standard for [SBS HD](#).^[22] SBS had previously down converted its scheduled [SBS](#) high-definition content to the [576p](#) standard. On 5 June 2012, SBS upgraded its HD format from [720p](#) to [1080i](#).^[23]

LCN	Service	Notes
3	SBS	Original analogue channel (simulcast until last ASO)
30	SBS HD	1080i simulcast of SBS
31	SBS Viceland	Young Demographic. HD only
32	SBS World Movies	Dedicated movie channel for Australian & international movies. HD only
33	SBS Food	Food and cooking channel
34	NITV	National Indigenous Television

On 1 June 2006, the SBS managing director, [Shaun Brown](#), announced the corporation's desire to initiate in-show commercial breaks, in the same manner as the commercial television networks. He said that the move would raise \$10 million in the first year, as he believes that SBS's current strategy of showing ads between programs "is unpopular with viewers". "On average we lose more than half our audience during these breaks – this is 30 per cent more than other broadcasters", claimed Brown upon announcing the new move.^[24]

SBS's commercial breaks remained at their existing statutory limit of five minutes per hour, as opposed to the fifteen minutes per hour permitted on Australia's fully commercial stations. An individual break lasted between one and two minutes. A related change was the launch of a one-hour 6:30 pm edition of [World News](#), replacing the half-hour [World News Australia](#) and [World Sport](#) programs. In-show advertising commenced on 9 October 2006 during the 7.30 pm broadcast of [MythBusters](#).

Former SBS television services are [SBS Essential](#) (LCN 31, sporting events, and other digital-only projects, when available) and [SBS World News Channel](#) (LCN 32, foreign news service).

Subscription channels [edit]

In 1995, SBS launched a new division called SBS Subscription TV. In October 1995, the first subscription channel to launch was [World Movies](#); the channel focuses on independent international films. It was closed on 31 January 2018 but relaunched on free-to-air television on 1 July 2019. In April 2010, SBS launched [Studio](#) (previously marketed as STVDIO); that channel focused on arts programming such as classical and popular music, literature, film, visual arts and dance with documentaries and performances. However, Studio closed down on 27 March 2015 and was replaced by [Foxtel Arts](#).

Radio [edit]

Main article: [SBS Radio](#)

[SBS Radio](#) broadcasts in 74 languages in all Australian states, producing an estimated 13,500 hours of Australian programming for its two frequencies in Sydney and [Melbourne](#) as well as for its national network. Much like [SBS TV](#), SBS radio receives funding from a mix of government grants, paid-for government information campaigns and commercial advertising.^[25] SBS Radio broadcast the [Euro 2008](#) in Austria and Switzerland.

Following "extensive community consultation" in 2003, SBS introduced a range of new programs, including services in [Malay](#), [Somali](#) and [Amharic](#) – in addition to the expansion of many existing programs.^[25]

In April 2013, SBS rolled out a major overhaul of its radio [schedule](#). The last major review of the SBS Radio schedule had taken place in 1994, and since then Australia's demographics had changed significantly. With the new schedule SBS intends to better reflect Australia's ethnic composition. With the addition of six new languages: [Malayalam](#), [Dinka](#), [Hmong](#), [Pashto](#), [Swahili](#) and [Tigrinya](#), SBS has brought the total number of languages from 68 to 74.^{[26][27]}

SBS rolled out a trial of [RDS](#) (Radio Data System) in the Melbourne and Sydney broadcast areas in November 2012. Radio listeners can identify the SBS Radio service by the "SBSRadio" identifier and, if their radio permits, by RDS scrolling text on their FM-capable RDS radio.

[NOW](#) and [NEXT](#) data was progressively added to all radio services in 2012 and 2013. This now/next data is displayed on FM RDS Radio (Melbourne/Sydney) and [DAB+](#) reception areas for radios that can display metadata.

NOW and NEXT Radio schedule is also displayed on free-to-air [Terrestrial Digital Television](#) (DTV) program guides and on [TiVo](#) and TBox where applicable.

SBS rolled out the 14-day rolling radio schedule over DTV television in November 2012. A radio event (or program) can be viewed and booked/recorded to PVR or the listener reminded. The schedule adapts to daylight saving changes as required.

	Service	Notes
Analogue with digital simulcast	SBS Radio 1	Original SBS Radio 1 broadcasts (usually on VHF band II) ¹
	SBS Radio 2	Original SBS Radio 2 broadcasts (usually on MF) ¹
	SBS Radio 3	Commenced April 2013. Radio 3 broadcasts the best of the BBC World Service and SBS Special events coverage including the 2014 FIFA World Cup
	SBS Chill	SBS Chill provides a music break from the stress of work, the rush that is daily life.

Digital only	SBS Arabic24	Arabic-language programming 24 hours a day.
	SBS PopAsia	Asian pop music in Mandarin, Cantonese, Japanese, Korean and more.
	SBS PopDesi	Bollywood, Bhangra and Desi pop music.
	¹ Different areas receive different programming, but they all for the most part follow the programming of a selected city's SBS service.	

Other [\[edit\]](#)

On demand [\[edit\]](#)

See also: [SBS on Demand](#)

SBS on Demand is a video on demand and catch up TV service run by SBS. In April 2016, SBS launched a video on demand application called "SBS On Demand VR" (later renamed "SBS VR").

Multilingual services [\[edit\]](#)

SBS has been providing multilingual services since 1975. The SBS in-language units in both Sydney and Melbourne, provide a range of language services for medium to large organisations, private and government businesses, including accredited translations, typesetting, voiceovers/re-narration, subtitling and video services in over 68 languages.

SBS independent [\[edit\]](#)

Main article: [SBS independent](#)

SBS independent (SBSi) was the primary production unit of SBS programming, which existed from August 1994 to December 2007. At the end of 2007, SBS independent was merged with the SBS Content and Online Division.

Youth orchestra [\[edit\]](#)

Main article: [SBS Radio and Television Youth Orchestra](#)

The SBS Youth Orchestra was an Australian premier youth orchestra, founded in 1988 by the now late [Matthew Krel](#). It was disbanded in 2013.

SBS Sexuality [\[edit\]](#)

An online platform that celebrates "the diversity of sexuality in Australia and its multicultural communities".^[28]

Film distribution [\[edit\]](#)

SBS used to distribute films in the early 1990s. In 2014, SBS revived its film distribution division as SBS Movies, which then teamed up with SBS' home video distributor [Madman Entertainment](#). Both SBS and Madman released the 2016 American film [Hell or High Water](#) in Oceania.

Corporation [\[edit\]](#)

Board [\[edit\]](#)

Chairman

- [Grisha Sklovsky AM](#) (1978–1981)^[29]
- [Sir Nicholas Shehadie AC OBE](#) (1981–1999)
- [Carla Zampatti AC](#) (1999–2009)
- [Joseph Skrzynski AO](#) (2009–2014)^[30]
- [Nihal Gupta](#) (2014–2016)^{[31][32]}
- [Bulent Hass Della AO](#) (2017–2020)^[33]
- [George Savvides AM](#) (2020–present)^[34]

Managing director

- [Ron Fowell](#) (1978–1985)
- [Ron Brown](#) (1985–1987)^[35]
- [Brian Johns](#) (1987–1992)^[35]
- [Malcolm Long](#) (1993–1997)^[36]
- [Nigel Milan](#) (1997–2005)^[37]
- [Shaun Brown](#) (2005–2011)
- [Michael Ebeid](#) (2011–2018)^[38]
- [James Taylor](#) (2018–present)^[39]

Current board members

- [George Savvides](#)
- [Sally Walker](#)
- [Daryl Karp](#)
- [William Lenehan](#)
- [Dorothy \(Dot\) West](#)
- [Peeyush Gupta](#)

See also [\[edit\]](#)

- [Digital radio in Australia](#)
- [List of programs broadcast by Special Broadcasting Service](#)
- [SBS Sport](#)

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External links [edit]

- Official website
- SBS In Language Service

v·t·e			Special Broadcasting Service	
SBS Television	Free-to-air channels	SBS	SBS	SBS HD · SBS Viceland (HD) · SBS World Movies HD · SBS Food · NITV
	Defunct channels	SBS Essential	SBS World News Channel	STUDIO · World Movies
SBS Radio	Analogue stations	SBS Radio 1	SBS Radio 1 (AM)	(FM) · SBS Radio 2 (FM) · SBS Radio (FM, where SBS Radio 1/2 analog were not available)
	Digital stations	SBS Radio 3	SBS Radio 3	SBS Radio 4 · SBS Chill · SBS PopAsia · SBS PopAraby · SBS PopDesi
Online	SBS on Demand	SBS VR		
See also	SBS independent · SBS Radio and Television Youth Orchestra · Programs · SBS Sport · SBS World News			
v·t·e			Free-to-air television channels in Australia	
Public broadcasters	ABC Television	ABC TV	ABC TV (HD) · ABC TV Plus · ABC Kids · ABC Me · ABC News	
	SBS Television	SBS	(HD) · SBS Viceland (HD) · SBS World Movies (HD) · SBS Food · NITV	
Major metropolitan commercial networks	Seven West Media	Seven	Seven (HD) · 7two · 7mate (HD) · 7flix	
	Nine Entertainment Co.	Nine	(HD) · 9Gem (HD) · 9Go! · 9Life · 9Rush	
	Ten Network Holdings	10	(HD) · 10 Peach · 10 Bold · 10 Shake	
Regional/remote affiliate commercial networks	Seven Network affiliates	Prime7	Prime7 (HD) · GWN7 · SCA Seven (HD)	
	Nine Network affiliates	Nine Regional	(HD) · NBN Television (HD) · Imparja Television · Mildura Digital Television · Tasmanian Digital Television (HD) · West Digital Television	
	Network 10 affiliates	WIN Television	(HD · Sky News on WIN) · Central Digital Television · Darwin Digital Television (HD)	
Community broadcasters	Metropolitan	C31 Melbourne	· C44 Adelaide	
	Regional/remote satellite	Indigenous Community TV		
Datacasting licensed channels	Aspire TV · Extra · Gold · iShop TV · Racing.com · OpenShop · Spree TV · TVSN			
Television platforms	Digital terrestrial (Freeview) · High-definition · Satellite · Subscription			
Miscellaneous	Television in Australia · Television broadcasting in Australia · Timeline of Australian television			
v·t·e			Members of the European Broadcasting Union	
Active members	Current	ARD	(BR · DLR · DW · HR · MDR · NDR · RB · RBB · SR · SWR · WDR) · ARMR · ARMTV · BBC · BHRT · BNR · BNT · BTRC · C+ · C1R · ČR · ČT · CyBC · DR · E1 · ENRS · EPTV · ERR · ERSI · ERT · ERTT · ERTU · GPB · GRF (FMM · FTV · RF) · GRMC (MMD · RMC · TMC) · HRT · ICTI/ITV · JRTV · KAN · LNC · LSM (LR · LTV) · LRT · MRT · MTVA · NPO (AVROTROS · BNNVARA · EO · HUMAN · KRO-NCRV · MAX · NOS · NTR · PowNed · Ster · VPRO · WNL) · NRK · ORF · PBS · PR · RAI · RDO (MK · OP) · ROR · RO/TVR · RTBF · RTCG · RTÉ · RTL · RTP · RTS · RTSH · RTVA · RTVE (RNE · TVE) · RTVS · RTVSLO · RÚV · SMRTV · SNRT · SRG SSR · SRT (SR · SVT · UR) · TDA · TF1 · TG4 · TL · TRM · TV2 (DK · NO) · TVP · TRT · UA:PBC · UKIB (C4 · ITV · S4C · STV) · VGTRK · VR · VRT · Yle · ZDF	
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Categories: Special Broadcasting Service | Public television in Australia | Multilingual broadcasters | Mass media companies established in 1978 | Television channels and stations established in 1978 | 1978 establishments in Australia | Commonwealth Government agencies of Australia | Publicly funded broadcasters

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